

CITY OF SAN JOSÉ, CALIFORNIA
Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement
801 North First Street, Room 400
San José, California 95110-1795

Hearing Date/Agenda Number
P.C. 10/9/02 Item: 4.

File Number
PDCSH 02-032

Application Type
Planned Development Rezoning

Council District
9

Planning Area
Cambrian/Pioneer

Assessor's Parcel Number(s)
569-02-053

STAFF REPORT

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Completed by: Teresa Estrada

Location: Southeast corner of Russo Drive and Cherryview Lane

Gross Acreage: 4.16 DU/AC

Net Acreage: 3.93 DU/AC

Net Density: 38.2 DU/AC

Existing Zoning: A(PD) Planned Development Existing Use: Vacant

Proposed Zoning: A(PD) Planned Development Proposed Use: 24-single family courthome units and 126 affordable senior housing units

GENERAL PLAN

Completed by: TE

Land Use/Transportation Diagram Designation
Medium High Density Residential (12-25 DU/AC)

Project Conformance:
☒ Yes ☐ No
☒ See Analysis and Recommendations

SURROUNDING LAND USES AND ZONING

Completed by: TE

North: Multi-family attached units

R-M Residence

East: Commercial

A(PD) Planned Development

South: State Route 85, shopping center

A(PD) Planned Development

West:: Single-family detached units

R-1-8 Residence

ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS

Completed by: TE

☐ Environmental Impact Report found complete
☒ Negative Declaration circulated on September 19, 2002
☐ Negative Declaration adopted on

☐ Exempt
☐ Environmental Review Incomplete

FILE HISTORY

Completed by: TE

Annexation Title: Jarvis #24

Date: 12/3/84

PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION

☐ Approval
☒ Approval with Conditions
☐ Denial
☐ Uphold Director's Decision

Date: _____

Approved by: _____
☐ Action
☒ Recommendation

OWNER

John E. Giacomazzi
899 Vista Del Roble Place
San Jose, CA 95120

DEVELOPER

Roem Development, Inc.
c/o Anthony Ho
1895 Dobbin Drive
San Jose, CA 95133

PUBLIC AGENCY COMMENTS RECEIVED

Completed by: TE

Department of Public Works

See attached memorandum

Other Departments and Agencies

N/A

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

None received.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**BACKGROUND**

The applicant, Roem Development Corporation, is proposing to rezone the subject site from A(PD) to A(PD) to allow up to 24-single family courthome units and 126 affordable independent senior housing units on 4.16 acres.

The existing zoning, approved in 1998 (File No. PDC97-11-078), allowed the development of a large used car dealership and included the area east of the site now developed with commercial uses approved with rezoning File No. PDCSH99-092. The developer of the previously approved project, Auto Nation, had decided not to proceed with the development. The site was also the subject of a previous rezoning proposal, File No. PDC00-05-039, for a 138-unit multi-family and senior residential facility, however, this rezoning proposal was withdrawn. The subject site is currently vacant but previously had been used for agricultural purposes.

The site is one of the last large, flat vacant parcels in the area. This rectangular shaped property borders Highway 85 to the south with Almaden Fashion Plaza located just beyond. To the east is the adjacent commercial use consisting of Home Expo Design Center and Best Buy. To the north of the site is an apartment complex across Cherryview Lane. Single-family detached houses are located to the west of the site across Russo Drive.

Project Description

The proposed project has two parts. Approximately half of the site will be developed with 24 single-family detached courthome-type units. These will be arranged in clusters of four units each. Two groups take access from Russo Drive with the rest taking access from a new private street off of Cherryview Lane. Parking is provided on driveway aprons proposed with the rear units of the courthomes as well as on public streets. Three parking spaces are proposed at the terminus of the private 'Street A', however, due to its narrow width, no parking is allowed on the private street.

On the southerly portion of the project site, the project proposes 126 affordable senior attached units contained in a three-story building with surface parking. Access to the senior housing is via a new driveway at the new terminus of Russo Drive. The conceptual architecture for the senior housing is mission/craftsman style architecture to differentiate it from the detached residences.

The project is adjacent to a closed section of Russo Drive. The street will be shortened as part of this project with roughly half of the area converted to a turn-key public park by the developer.

GENERAL PLAN CONFORMANCE

The project site was the subject of a General Plan Amendment (File No. GP01-09-01) which changed the General Plan from General Commercial to Medium High Density Residential (12-25 DU/AC). The courthome portion of the project provides a net density of 14.2 DU/AC and is in full conformance to the General Plan designation.

The senior housing portion of the site is proposed at a net density of 56.3 DU/AC. The resulting average density is resulting is 38.2 DU/AC. Under the use of the Discretionary Alternate Use Policy, the General Plan allows the development of projects proposing 100% affordable housing at any density if such housing in its entirety is:

1. rental or ownership housing affordable to very low-, low- or moderate-income households,
2. proposed for a site and density compatible with surrounding land use designations, and
3. located on a site consistent with the housing distribution policies of the General Plan.

The project conforms to the General Plan in that it is restricted to housing affordable to very low-, low-, or moderate-income households rented to seniors. The project is also proposed at a density that is compatible with the existing adjacent apartments by virtue of its separation from other existing residential uses and conformance to the Residential Design Guidelines, which include policies to ensure compatibility with adjacent development. The proposed building is designed to incorporate two- and three-story elements to provide an appropriate height transition between the site and the existing adjacent single family detached residences to the west. The project furthers the distribution of such housing project in that it is not located within a census tract containing a disproportionate number of lower income households.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The environmental impacts of this project were addressed in an Initial Study and a Mitigated Negative Declaration was adopted for this project on October 9, 2002. Key issues that were addressed include; noise, traffic, archaeology, air and water quality impacts, and on-site soil contamination.

A noise report was prepared to assess the potential noise impacts on the residences. Much of the noise impacts for this area are a result of the adjacent State Route 85 freeway. The project will be required to include a 10-foot tall sound wall adjacent to the freeway, eliminate balconies for second and third floor units within 598 feet of the centerline of State Route 85, and include special construction techniques as required per the noise report. This will ensure that the General Plan noise levels standards are achieved. It should be noted that the noise report for the adjacent commercial uses to the east included mitigation to reduce noise impacts to the subject site. This enabled a more coordinated mitigation package to ensure that specific noise generating activities such as the commercial rooftop equipment and truck loading for the adjacent commercial uses would not impact the proposed units.

The potential traffic impacts for this site were included in a traffic study that was performed for the adjacent project consisting of the Home Expo Design Center and Best Buy (PDC00-05-039).

The report analyzed project traffic for a potentially larger residential development for the subject site consisting of 166 market-rate apartment units, which were originally proposed concurrently with the commercial project. The mitigation provided and constructed by the Expo project included adequate mitigation for the proposed residential development. The current project, consisting of just 24 courthome units and 126 senior housing units, results in less proposed residential traffic than originally projected in the previous traffic study. Therefore, this project is in conformance with both the City of San Jose Transportation Level of Service Policy and the requirements of the Santa Clara County Congestion Management Program.

Mitigation has also been included in the project to ensure that the project does not result in significant impacts in the areas of archaeological resources, soil contamination, air and water quality, and noise. Based on these analyses and mitigation, the Negative Declaration concludes that the project will not result in a significant environmental impact.

ANALYSIS

The analysis section of this report addresses the following key topics: 1) site design and compatibility with surrounding land uses and 2) conformance with the Residential Design Guidelines (RDGs).

Site Design and Compatibility with the Surrounding Land Uses

Staff has worked extensively with the applicant to ensure a site design that is compatible with the existing adjacent uses. The site design interface along the perimeter of the project was carefully designed and coordinated with the neighborhood. The proposed senior housing structure is situated on the property to provide street presence, a pedestrian-oriented environment with direct walkways from the sidewalks to the main entrance, and the appropriate setbacks from the adjacent uses. The proposed building will be setback about 78 feet from the closest, existing residential property line. Surface parking is located to the north and east, providing a greater separation for the building from the proposed courthome units and the existing commercial uses.

The courthome portion of the project was provided along the north side of the property to allow an appropriate transition between the senior housing and the apartment to the north. This would ensure better integration of the units into the neighborhood.

Building Height. The senior housing structure is three-stories tall with a predominant average height of about 38 feet. Two, taller elements are proposed to add visual interest which extend to an overall height of 44 and 50 feet. It is anticipated that the park, with its future trees should be more than able to provide additional screening. Staff has worked with the applicant to assure buildings are set back from the existing residences and to reduce the building height along the westerly interface to two- and three- story elements closest to the existing residences.

Landscaping. Substantial landscaping including trees and shrubs is used throughout the project site to buffer the proposed structures from adjacent uses. Staff will continue to work with the applicant at the PD Permit stage to finalize the design of landscaping features along project frontages, specifically along the project's northerly frontage adjacent to the multi-family residences to ensure an attractive street frontage. Also as part of the project, the developer has agreed to provide back-up landscaping consisting of trees and shrubs along along the west side of Russo Drive across the project frontage north to Cherry Avenue. The inclusion of this

landscaping will provide a better visual buffer for the rear yards of the existing single family houses from the proposed project, as well as improve the streetscape along Russo Drive.

Conformance with the Residential Design Guidelines

Courthomes. The courthome portion of the project substantially conforms to the minimum requirements of the Residential Design Guidelines with regard to setbacks, courtyard design, open space, parking, and architecture. The proposed setbacks from Cherryview Lane are 12 feet, which is generally consistent with most single-family tracts with side-on orientation to a street. Although the building setback along Russo Drive is provided at 1-foot minimum, the front yard of the units has a total “front yard” landscaped area of 10 feet. The existing, closed segment of Russo Drive will be narrowed slightly, but will conform to the appropriate, standard public street cross section design.

The courtyard is designed to meet the requirements of the RDG’s with the minimum 8-foot separation between units in the court, the 200 square feet minimum interior landscaping per unit. The project exceeds the minimum requirement of 400 square feet of private open space per unit. The intent of the guideline requirement for the provision of common open space is being met by the development of the new park. The RDGs allow consideration of a reduction or elimination of the common open space requirement if the project is in close proximity to a public park. This project will create an approximately 10,945 square foot public park within an unused portion of the Russo Drive right-of-way.

Adequate guest parking for the units is provided on Russo Drive and on Cherryview Lane in front of the proposed project. Additional parking will also be provided in discrete parking bays within the project.

Affordable Senior Housing. The project generally conforms to the Residential Design Guidelines in terms of setbacks, general site design, and architecture for cluster housing. The proposed project is adjacent to single-family residences on the west side. Staff has worked with the applicant to ensure that buildings are setback from these existing residences. The Residential Design Guidelines recommends that next to existing, single-family rear yards, a minimum setback of 2 feet for every foot of building height be provided. Technical compliance would require that the tower feature be setback 88 feet rather than the 78 feet that is proposed. However, most other portions of the building exceed the minimum setbacks. For this reason, staff feels that, the project meets the intent of the setback policies.

The project includes approximately 60 square feet of private open space per senior housing unit, except where indicated by the acoustical report. Common open space provided equals approximately 100 square feet per dwelling unit and consists of community rooms within the building, and fountains, a garden and seating areas in a centralized courtyard almost completely surrounded by the senior housing building. The proposed public park along the project frontage also provides open space to off-set the amount of common open space on-site.

The project provides parking at a ratio of 0.8 space per unit which is consistent with most other recently approved comparable senior housing projects

PUBLIC OUTREACH

The neighborhood has demonstrated great interest and involvement with the development of this parcel and the property east of the subject site. The project applicant has worked extensively with the core members of the neighborhood association, the Almaden Oaks Action Committee. Issues identified by the neighborhood group included the closure of Lansing Avenue to through traffic and the inclusion of park at the terminus of Russo Drive, traffic issues, parking, project interface issues, and architectural design. Almaden Oaks has indicated that the inclusion of the park as part of the project at the end of Lansing Avenue is a vital component of the project. The Almaden Oaks Action Committee generally expressed support for the project.

Notices of the public hearing before the Planning Commission and City Council were published and distributed to the owners and tenants of all properties located within 1,000 feet of the project site. Additionally, a Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration was mailed to all properties within 1,000 feet of the project site and posted on the City web site. Staff has been available to discuss the project with members of the public.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning Staff recommends approval of proposed Planned Development Rezoning for the following reasons:

1. The proposed project conforms to the site's General Plan Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation of Medium High Density Residential (12-25 DU/AC) with the use of the Discretionary Alternate Use Policy which allows affordable housing projects at any density.
2. The proposed project conforms to the Residential Design Guidelines.
3. The project furthers the goals and objectives of the City's in-fill housing strategies.
4. The project furthers the goals and objectives of the City's housing strategies to provide affordable housing.
5. The proposed rezoning is compatible with existing and proposed uses on the adjacent and neighboring properties.

Attachment: PDCSH02-032 Development Standards, Location Map, Public Works Memorandum, Mitigated Negative Declaration

c: John Giacomazzi, 899 Vista Del Roble Place, San Jose, CA 95120
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TE:ll/207-02